

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 52

### THE STARRY FLAG WEEKLY

A colored covered weekly published by Street & Smith depicting the adventures of Hal Maynard, a soldier in the Spanish-American War. Began May 4, 1898 and ended after 20 issues in February 1899. The later numbers were issued monthly. Size 7x10½ with 32 pages. One of the rarest of colored covered series.



## Colonel Prentiss Ingraham

By J. Edward Leithead

Prentiss Ingraham actually was a colonel, holding that rank in the Cuban Army in their rebellion against Spanish rule. You could also have called him Captain Ingraham at another time, since he served as an officer in the Cuban Navy. Aboard the "Hornet" he was a successful blockade-runner, but eventually there was that one trip too many and the United States Navy gathered in the "Hornet." The Spaniards were eager to get their hands on this American military adventurer, and finally did. Ingraham, imprisoned in Morro Castle, faced trial as a filibuster and was sentenced to face a firing-squad. But he made his getaway on an American vessel, aided by the English Consul, before sentence was carried out, else many a dime and nickel novel that you and I have enjoyed would never have been written.

It wasn't the first time he'd been a prisoner of war and escaped. This takes us back to Prentiss Ingraham's Civil War days and the siege of Port Hudson, where he received a wound in the foot, which ever afterward bothered him. Seized by Union soldiers, Ingraham was routed North for prison camp when opportunity to escape presented itself and he took it.

Prentiss Ingraham had enlisted in the Confederate Army in April, 1861. He was a lieutenant on the staff of Withers' Mississippi Regiment of light artillery; later scout commander of a Texas cavalry outfit, Ross's Brigade. When the South lost the war, Prentiss, like some other embittered ex-Confederates—he was born Dec. 28, 1843, near Natchez, Mississippi, and a born fighting man—took off for Mexico and joined the army of Benito Pablo Juar-

ez, which was fighting the French regime of the Austrian archduke Maximilian, then emperor of Mexico.

Intending at the time never to return to the U. S. A., Prentiss drifted to South America, afterward to Europe where there was war between Austria and Prussia. His soldierly ability must have been easily recognized for he was assigned to the staff of General Hoffmann and, in 1866, he was at the battle of Sandown, Austria. Crete, Africa, apparently was the next trouble spot which beckoned this soldier of fortune, and here he battled the Turks. From that scene of warfare he went into the army of the Khedive of Egypt.

Considering the great number of dime and nickel novels he wrote, one wonders how Prentiss Ingraham found time to do them; for his own life was as crammed with excitement and adventure as one of his fictional characters or those historical ones, Buffalo Bill and his "pards of the plains," about whom Ingraham wove some of his very best tales. Although there are estimates that he wrote as high as 1,000 novels, I think his own claim of around 600 is more correct. This was made about 1900 and may not include stories he wrote for Street & Smith's color cover Buffalo Bill Stories, some of the same publishers' Jesse James Stories and serials in their story paper, Good News.

From my own checkup there were 67 original Buffalo Bills by Ingraham in Beadle's Dime Library, 26 in Beadle's Half-Dime Library and 1 in Beadle's Boy's Library. Until that definitive biography, "The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill" by Don Russell

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was published in November 1960 (by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, if you haven't bought your copy yet and the price is only \$5.95!) all previous biographers of William F. Cody credited Ned Buntline (who wrote only 4 or possibly 5 Buffalo Bills) and Prentiss Ingraham with authoring all Buffalo Bill novels, 5c, 10c and 15c, not taking into account (because they didn't know of them and made no effort to look beyond what some other biographer had set down) the heavy contributions made by W. Bert Foster, William Wallace Cook, John H. Whitson and a few other writers.

Because Don Russell never rehashed and dug so deeply into every phase of Buffalo Bill's life and times, I'm going to quote as I go along from some of the highly informative and interesting letters he wrote me while writing "Lives and Legends." It was a prize winning biography and well deserved to be.

To go back to Col. Ingraham, it was in London, in 1869, that he had some short articles and poems published, thus starting his literary career. He had a first-class education, and his varied experiences before he settled down to writing should have made him a master teller of the adventure tale, since the talent for writing was already his. His father was the Rev. Joseph H. Ingraham, his mother Mary Brooks, and Prentiss not only had the advantage of private tutoring at St. Timothy's Military Academy, Maryland, but attended Jefferson College, Mississippi, and later the Mobile Medical College from which he transferred into the Army of the Confederacy.

Gilbert Patten, creator of the Merriwell brothers, and a great admirer of Col. Ingraham, has left, from personal knowledge, one of the few if not the only word picture of Prentiss' appearance and personality, in his article, "My Friend, Col. Prentiss Ingraham," in the May 1944 issue of Dime Novel Roundup. This was a time before Patten had made the Merriwells an American by-word, when he

was selling stories to Beadle and Adams, and he caught a glimpse of Col. Ingraham through the open door of Editor Orville J. Victor's office at 98 William Street, New York. Patten states, "I could see another visitor standing beside his (Victor's) long desk and chatting with him. The visitor was not a tall man, although his fine slender figure and military bearing made him look tall. He was holding his military hat in his hands. His long dark moustache and abundant black hair, only slightly touched with gray, gave him a distinguished air and made him look every inch a daring officer and adventurer. My heart beat a tattoo, for I knew him at once from pictures I had seen of him. At last I was gazing upon one of my boyhood heroes (I can understand how Patten felt, it was like the time I first saw Buffalo Bill in person) whose tales of derring-do had influenced me in a measure to turn my State of Maine Yankee hand to the invention of similar yarns; similar, yet with a difference, for while Col. Ingraham had adventured in many lands and fought in seven wars, I had never but once before ventured beyond the boundaries of New England. Presently Col. Ingraham came out and passed me, limping slightly, so near that I could have reached out and touched the skirt of his long dark coat. I wanted to speak to him but awe held me tongue-tied. A little later, admitted to Mr. Victor's office, I asked the gray-headed editor if the person who had just left were not Col. Ingraham, and was told that he was. I wished to ask for his address, but did not do so."

Editor Victor couldn't know, of course, that the youthful Patten at his desk-side that day, from whom he'd been buying Wild West tales, would, within less than ten years, be writing the adventures of Frank Merriwell, enclosed in bright colored wrappers, and thus start on the way out the long-established firm of Beadle and Adams and their black-and-white, woodcut illustrated dime and nickel libraries.



Ten years were to pass before Gilbert Patten saw Prentiss Ingraham again, at a time when the colonel badly needed a friend; therefore Patten will reappear in this piece before the final curtain.

Returning to the United States and setting aside his bitterness over the lost cause he had served, this courtly Southerner naturally gave thought to love and marriage. In New York he met Rose Langley, author, artist and composer, and in 1875 they were married and continued to live in New York (after Ingraham's death, when Street & Smith were reprinting his stories in book format paperbacks, the renewal of copyright was always made in the name of ROSA L. Ingraham).

Before his marriage, Prentiss had written some novels, plays and poems. Short stories by him were published in the Saturday Journal (1870). Two years later came a serial from his pen. The late Albert Johannsen, in his superfluous "The House of Beadle and Adams," Vol. 2 (there is now a third volume to complete the set, all published by the University of Oklahoma Press and handsome volumes all) states that, "His (Ingraham's) first dime novel, 'The Masked Spy,' appeared as No. 97, Starr's American Novels in 1872, and after that novel after novel followed from his pen in a ceaseless stream for nearly 34 years. Ingraham was unable to use the type-writer and so, in longhand, he turned out a couple of 35,000 or 70,000-word novels per month. He once wrote a Half-Dime Library in a day and a night, and a Dime Library in 5 days . . . Most of his stories were written for Beadle and Adams, but he wrote also for other publishers. In the late 1870's he wrote serials for the Family Story Paper and Saturday Night and also wrote a number of Nickel Libraries. In the Saturday Evening Post, Nov. 13, 1875, appeared the first installment of 'The Boy Wrecker, or, The Waif of the Wave,' and in one issue of Vickery's Fireside Visitor, in 1882, he had short stories under four different pseudonyms. After Beadle

and Adams went out of existence, he became a contributor to Golden Hours and also was responsible for a number of cloth-bound books . . ." (In this period he began writing for Street & Smith again, after an earlier disagreement, as will be touched on later) . . . "Besides writing under his own name, Ingraham used the pseudonym, Dr. Noel Dunbar, (Major) Dangerfield Burr, Major Henry B. Stoddard, Colonel Leon Lafitte, Frank Powell, Harry Dennies Perry, Midshipman Tom Hall, Lieut. Preston Graham and several more. Two novels with the byline 'Capt. Alfred B. Taylor' were reprinted as by Ingraham."

These were really Captain Taylor stories as Johannsen later made correction in an article, "Alfred Bronaugh Taylor, a Beadle Author," in Dec. 15, 1957, issue of Dime Novel Roundup.

Here's what Don Russell wrote me at the time concerning the pair of novels in question, Beadle's Half-Dime Library No. 191, Buffalo Billy, the Boy Bullwhacker and No. 194 Buffalo Bill's Bet, later reprinted in Pocket Library Nos. 106 and 165 under Col. Ingraham's name:

"Capt. Alfred B. Taylor of Nos. 191 and 194, Half-Dime Library, was actually an officer of the 5th U. S. Cavalry during the period that Buffalo Bill was scout for the regiment. There is a sketch of him in 'Across the Continent With the Fifth Cavalry' by Capt. George F. Price, New York, 1883, in which it is said, p. 424, 'He engaged in mercantile and literary pursuits at New York City until the fall of 1881'—the two novels were published in the spring of 1881. Johannsen has accepted my finding on this, unhappily after his book was published. Our guess is that Ingraham may have helped him sell the stories or edited them; at all events they were later published as by Ingraham. I think you will find that Ingraham also used Capt. Taylor as a character in some of his stories."

In the same year that Custer's Last Stand occurred, Street & Smith pub-



lished a serial, "The Crimson Trail, or, On Custer's Last Warpath, as Witnessed by Hon. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill)" in New York Weekly from Sep. 25, 1876, to Oct. 30, 1876 (6 issues).

Patten, in "My Friend, Col. Prentiss Ingraham," states that "His (Ingraham's) friends and associates were such men as 'Wild Bill' Hickok, 'Texas Jack' Omohundro, 'Buffalo Bill,' Gen. Custer and 'Ned Buntline' (Col. E. Z.

Judson), who wrote the early Buffalo Bill novels. He hunted with such men in the West and was involved in one skirmish and wounded by an arrow. Following the Custer massacre on the Little Big Horn, he rushed into that country and wrote the first installment of a serial, 'Custer's Last Warpath,' on the battlefield where Custer died. The story appeared in Street & Smith's New York Weekly."

Johannsen, in "The House of Beadle and Adams," Vol. 2, says, "In 1881, with David Adams, he (Ingraham) made a trip West, spent some time with the three Powell brothers and with Cody, and in 1884, for a short time, he was advance agent for Buffalo Bill's show." nothing about Ingraham going West earlier, so that he could have been on the battleground right after it happened. Who wrote this serial—Ingraham or Buffalo Bill? In the serialization no by-line is given, only "Witnessed by Hon. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill)". The story was reprinted in Nugget Library No. 7 in 1889, with Buffalo Bill shown as author. In 1896 or thereabouts it was again re-issued as No. 180 of Diamond Dick Library, with no change in authorship.

Don Russell was "curious about this New York Weekly" serial, for, as I have said before he took nothing for granted, he had to know before putting down as fact anything concerning the people and events in "The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill." He wrote me:

"... I have been compiling a bibliography of Dime Novels and other fiction signed by Buffalo Bill, or W. F. Cody as the case may be, and it

occurs to me that we have not discussed that angle very much. All I have came out of Johannsen. Do you know of any others for Street & Smith besides 'Custer's Last Warpath'? And some considerations regarding it.

"In New York Weekly, Aug. 8, 1875, Buffalo Bill has a story, 'The Pearl of the Prairies, or, The Scout and the Renegade.' You date the Custer story 1876 (Ralph Smith, always ready to help, supplied me with full data on this from his file of New York Weeklies, which I sent along to Russell). Now I have never found anything connecting Prentiss Ingraham with Buffalo Bill prior to 1879. You do not know if Buffalo Bill signed it or not, you say. What have you got on Ingraham writing it?

"Also, do you have the data on No. 180 Diamond Dick Library? I have dates for almost everything else.

"The other Buffalo Bill items given by Johannsen are Vickery's Fireside Visitor, Apr. 1875, 'The Haunted Valley, or, A Leaf from a Hunter's Life' and Saturday Evening Post, Oct. 16, 1875, 'Prairie Prince, the Boy Outlaw, or, Trained to His Doom. There are 22 Beadle and Adams by Buffalo Bill. These two apparently are short stories or sketches, not dime novels. For reasons I have stated I assign to Buffalo Bill himself those written before 1879. There are 5 of them for B. & A., and 'The Gold Bullet Sport' would be the first probable Ingraham, Mar. 29-May 31, 1879, in Saturday Journal (Beadle's predecessor of Beadle's Weekly and Banner Weekly) and No. 83 Dime Library, Dec. 17, 1879."

My answer to this was that if Cody had that story, The Pearl of the Prairies, in New York Weekly in 1875, Francis S. Smith (then head of Street & Smith) might have published the Custer serial by Ingraham under Buffalo Bill's name the next year because he thought it better "box office" than Ingraham's at the time. I must admit I was never too strong for the idea of Cody himself writing dime novels (anyway, unassisted). He was a man of action—but so was Prentiss Ingra-



ham. Cody hadn't much opportunity to go to school on the frontier—while Ingraham had plenty of good schooling. Yet it isn't that, either. Many very smart men have been self-educated, it's just that I didn't think Cody enough of a writer to do fiction (and reading "Letters from Buffalo Bill," edited and published by Stella Adelyne Foote, Montana, 1954, didn't do much toward convincing me he was a fictioneer). But both Don Russell and Albert Johannsen are against me on this point, and offer some very good reasons why I could be entirely wrong.

Proving the authorship of Custer's Last Warpath is a good example of the kind of research Don Russell employed in writing "Lives and Legends"; he checked, through various sources, where Cody was at the time the story was written and published, and found that "he was still scouting in Montana Territory as late as Sept. 6", and the first installment appeared in New York Weekly Sept. 25, 1876. In "The Conquest of the Missouri" by J. M. Hanson, McClurg & Co., Chicago, Captain Grant Marsh, of the steamer, "Far West," a sort of troopship for U. S. cavalymen among other uses, recalls meeting the handsome, buckskin-clad Buffalo Bill on the upper Yellowstone about that time. So it seems that Prentiss Ingraham authored Custer's Last Warpath despite "witnessed by" and two by-lines to the contrary.

(To be continued)

### DIME NOVELS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO January 1864

Two new series began during January, both short lived. Beadles Dime Library of Choice Fiction No. 1 was on the newsstands January 12 with "The White Faced Pacer; or, Before and After the Battle," by John Neal. The other new series saw a new publisher, James Redpath who issued in Boston Redpath's Books for the Camp Fires No. 1 featuring a number of short stories by Louisa May Alcott headed by "On Picket Duty." Chrono-

logically the following were issued during the month:

January 1. Beadles Dime Novels No. 64 "The Rangers of the Mohawk." A Tale of Cherry Valley, by Edward S. Ellis.

January 2. Beadles American Library No. 35 "Irona; or, Life on the Southwest Border," by Edward S. Ellis.

January 12. American Tales No. 3 "The Hermit of the Colorado Hills. A Story of the Texas Pampas, by William H. Bushnell.

January 13. Irwin P. Beadle Ten Cent Novels No. 4 "The Hunted Unionist; or, The Fortunes of a Fugitive," by Illion Constellano (Leon Lewis).

January 15. Beadles Dime Tales No. 5, containing a number of short stories "Women Defending the Wagon"; "Captivity of Jonathan Alder"; "Moody, the Refugee"; "The Leap for Life." Edited by Edward S. Ellis and probably written by him.

January 25. Ten Cent Novelettes No. 3 "The Bravo's Secret; or, The Spy of the Ten," by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.

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### MERRIWELL STORIES in TIP TOP WEEKLY BOUGHT & SOLD

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### FOR SALE

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## A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

**NICK CARTER, DETECTIVE.** Fiction's Most Celebrated Detective; Six Astonishing Adventures. Introduction by Robert Clurman. 362 p. The Mac-Millan Company, New York, N. Y.; 1963. A short superficial introduction to the reprinting of six stories about Nick Carter taken from Nick Carter Library and Nick Carter Weekly. I hope the book meets with success and that more similar compilation may be seen in the future. Illustrated. (Frank Schott wrote me about this one.)

**PURPLE PASSAGE.** The Life of Mrs. Frank Leslie, by Madeleine B. Stern. 281 p. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla. 1953. A well written biography of Mrs. Frank Leslie and a history of the Frank Leslie publications. A must for all collectors of story papers. Illustrated.

**MR. FRANK MERRIWELL,** by Gilbert Patten. 305 p. Alliance Book Corporation, New York, 1941. A disappointing story about Frank Merriwell as a middle age father and business man. The old gang is brought into the story, but the fire nurtured by nostalgia is somehow not kindled.

**THE UPTON SINCLAIR ARCHIVES.** A Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, and other materials from the Upton Sinclair Archives on exhibit at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington. Contains a list of 290 items on exhibit at the Lilly Library including some issues of Army and Navy Weekly and True Blue. Introduction by Ronald Gottesman. Illustrated.

## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 113. Jack Conroy, 7027 S. Jeffrey Blvd., Chicago, Ill. 60649 (New address)
- 118. Charles Rothstein, 986 N. W. 4th St., Apt. 18, Miami, Fla. 33136 (New address)
- 216. William Dowdy, Route 1, Huntington, Ark. (Correction of spelling name)
- 37. Robert McDowell, 301 N. W. 30th St., Miami, Fla. (New address)

## FOR SALE

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Alger books in Value edition, 30c 2 for 50c. 5 for \$1.00, diff.

Wide Awake Library (Tousey, black and white). All kinds of novels in this weekly. Price range 75c up, most of them \$1.00. Many Pluck and Luck titles appeared here first. Incidentally, if you want Pluck and Luck in beautiful condition, let me know. Prices for original issue Pluck and Luck are \$1.00, up. For large size reprints, 50c to \$1.00. Small, 3 for \$1.00.

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Damaged novels. Assortment of 9, some rare, not good enough for regular prices, \$3.00. (All nickel or dime weeklies).

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